

SUSPECT FALLS 60 FEET MAN CRITICAL AFTER LEAP FROM POLICE WINDOW

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As a homicide investigator scrambled to grab the cuff of his pants, a man suspected of killing a woman and four children leaped Thursday from a fifth-floor window at Detroit Police Headquarters.

Reco Jones, 22, who police suspect stabbed the five people to death on Wednesday, was in critical condition late Thursday after his plunge about 60 feet from a window in a homicide section interrogation room. Police said Jones, left alone for a few moments, pulled a metal grate off a window and jumped.

"They should have secured those windows a long time ago," one high-ranking police official said. "This whole thing is incomprehensible and unforgivable."

The incident was at least the fifth time since 1984 that someone has jumped or fallen from the nine-floor building at 1300 Beaubien.

After a 26-year-old woman who was being questioned in a killing jumped to her death from a fifth-floor window in 1995, the department ordered all suspects to be handcuffed while interrogated. The room from which Jones jumped has two signs that read: "Do not leave prisoners in this room uncuffed!"

Police officials and witnesses said Jones -- who did what appeared to be a swan dive from the window -- was not in handcuffs. Homicide officers who asked not to be named said suspects are often left alone and uncuffed.

"I've left people alone. We've all done it," one investigator said. "Now we know we have had a false sense of security."

After the 1995 incident, the department also installed metal security screens, which apparently are less than secure.

One veteran homicide investigator who saw Squad 7's interrogation room after the incident said, "You could see the bolts scattered around the floor. He got the strength to rip that thing off somehow."

"All of us thought those windows were secure," the officer said. "They're not."

There are 16 bolts to secure a black metal grating on a wooden window frame that is about five feet above the interrogation room. The bolts had been taken from the room late Thursday.

"Somehow he undid all the screws. We don't know how," a homicide investigator said.

Police officials were tight-lipped about their investigation into how the incident happened, whether security procedures were breached and how to keep it from happening again.

But the mother of two of the children killed in the house on Rutherford on Detroit's west side said she was glad he jumped.

"I want him to die," 21-year-old Ericka Bellamy said Thursday.

Bellamy's children, Delvontay, 5, and Shafontah, 3; her sister Yolanda Bellamy, 24, and her two sons, Nathan Burns Jr., 5, and Nathan Burns III, 3, were all stabbed in the throat early Wednesday morning.

Bellamy found the five dead on the living room floor after she and a neighbor peeked through a mail slot to see why no one was answering the door.

"I thought I was seeing things because all I saw was blood," she said.

By 2 p.m. Wednesday, police had arrested Jones, Yolanda Bellamy's on-again, off-again boyfriend with a history of violent crime who was released from jail within the past few months.

By 7 p.m. Wednesday, police confirmed, Jones had made incriminating statements. He cried, but maintained composure as homicide investigators questioned him, officials said.

A homicide investigator said Jones asked for breakfast at about 8 a.m. Thursday. And, after a detective spoke to him for a while, he asked to be alone.

"He said: 'Can I just have a few minutes to myself?' " the investigator said.

The detective left, heard a loud noise, screamed for help and tried to grab the man's leg -- but he was unsuccessful, investigators said.

Passersby in the busy Greektown area were shocked as they heard a scream and looked up to see the man falling from the fifth floor.

Janitors for the police department washed the steps with bleach and scrubbed two large puddles of blood about an hour after the man's fall as witnesses recounted what they had seen.

Timothy Taylor, 22, said when Jones hit the steps of 1300 Beaubien "it just sounded like a gunshot. That's how hard he hit the ground."

"Everybody started running out of the building and this guy was lying flat on the ground. He didn't move but I saw his leg twitch once," Taylor said.

"It was amazing. I guess he didn't want to land in prison so he landed on the concrete."

Daniel Dugan, 34, said he saw the man in midair, about halfway to the concrete steps.

"I saw him land -- boom -- and then bounce about four, five feet in the air. He was screaming and his arms were flailing as he fell," Dugan said. "There were about 10 people there and they all scattered."

As Jones underwent surgery at Detroit Receiving Hospital for an internal abdominal injury and a fractured right elbow for most of the day Thursday, officials could only guess why he jumped.

While being interrogated, one official said Jones "felt bad. He was really remorseful. He was boo-hoo-hooing but then he regained his composure."

The officer speculated that at some pivotal moment, Jones lost it.

"I think the severity of it must have just hit him hard. And he was like 'Oh, no,' " the officer said.

Others focused not on how Jones managed his jump, but whether the well-spoken welder at American Axle in Hamtramck could have slain a family.

Ericka Bellamy described Jones as a short, thin man with nerdy glasses who dated her sister for about a year -- more than half of which he was in jail on assault charges.

"He was just a regular guy," Bellamy said. "We spent New Year's Eve together -- the three of us."

LaTonya Williams, 26, who said she was Jones' girlfriend, said she spent Tuesday night with him. The two shopped at Super Kmart for batteries for a remote control for a television he had just bought for her. He went home and the two talked on the phone until about 12:30 a.m., she said.

Wednesday afternoon, Williams said, he called her to say the police were looking for him, that something bad had happened to Yolanda Bellamy.

"I said 'Did you do it?' and he said, 'Hell no!' " Williams said.

On Thursday morning, Williams came to police headquarters to talk to her boyfriend.

"I came around the corner and saw him lying there on the ground," she said.

Williams, who wore a dog tag around her neck that proclaimed "I belong to Reco," said that after Jones jumped, she believed for the first time that he could have committed the crimes.

If he had not done it, "then why would he have jumped?" Williams said. "I still want to know."

Caption: Photo RICHARD LEE/Detroit Free Press Photo WILLIAM ARCHIE/Detroit Free Press

Workers clean up the steps of Detroit Police Headquarters after **Reco Jones**, suspected in five slayings, jumped Thursday from one of the fifth-floor windows.

Kenyatia Bosley of Detroit adds a stuffed animal to the memorial created at the west side house where Yolanda Bellamy and four children were stabbed to death Wednesday.

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